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EDEN VALE.

A

NOVEL.

VOL. I.

TO THE
 RIGHT HONOURABLE
 LADY SHELBURNE
 MY LADY

I FEAR I shall incur the censure of
 a polite too overbearing in my
 of you in writing to you
 your Lady I thought it
 things to me as they
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 direct also that some more will be
 passed from them than they will
 found to contain for you
 have the liberty to address to Lady
 Sheburne's work that did not
 the highest degree of merit



EDEN VALE.

A

NOVEL.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

DEDICATED, BY PERMISSION,
TO LADY SHELBURNE.

By Mrs. CATHERINE PARRY.

K

VOL. I.

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M,DCC,I XXXIV.

T H E F A C E
 of the book is not so plain as
 the various persons whose ideas
 or motives whatever may present
 to take up these various points with
 one be found who would give
 much not but to know that all
 or young people may be
 to have all the



TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE
LADY SHELBURNE.

MY LADY,

I FEAR I shall incur the censure of a foible too prevalent in my sex, that of vanity, in presuming to obtain your Ladyship's permission to offer so trifling a performance as these volumes to your attention.—I have to dread also, that much more will be expected from them than they will be found to contain; “for who would have the temerity to address to Lady Shelburne a work that did not possess the highest degree of merit?”—I

DEDICATION.

can only allege in my defence, that
gratitude, and the profoundest re-
spect, impelled me to seek this pub-
lic opportunity of subscribing myself,

Your Ladyship's

Most obedient,

And devoted

Humble servant,

CATHERINE PARRY.

Montgomeryshire, North Wales,

May 1, 1784.

PREFACE.

P R E F A C E.

A Preface to a book is similar, and indeed intended to produce the same effect, as a Prologue to a new play: but, alas! with what superior advantages is this twin brother of ours furnished to usher in his author to the World! A handsome figure, arrayed in black velvet, his hair *au dernier goût*, with a judicious display of his cambrick handkerchief, a captivating bow, and persuasive voice, assisted with all the pathos of poetry, stands a better chance of succeeding, with his female auditors at least, for the trembling culprit behind

behind the curtain, than a few dull prosaic lines, which seldom say any thing but what has been better expressed, and more to the purpose, before, and in which we are often tempted to become egotists, relating intelligence of ourselves, which is perhaps never read or regarded.

A certain great periodical writer was of opinion, that readers wish to be acquainted with the minutest circumstances relative to the author whose works they have in contemplation. But since the rage for scribbling has become so universal, I am inclined to think this curiosity has subsided

P R E F A C E. iii

subsidéd: nor do I believe, among the various persons whom idleness, or any motive whatever, may prompt to take up these volumes, there will one be found who would give a pinch of snuff to know if I am old or young, handsome or ugly, though a female.

I should be wanting, however, in respect to that public, whose attention I claim, if I did not endeavour to bespeak their favour and their candour. These trifling volumes were begun seven years ago, at a period when some affecting circumstances happened in America, which induced

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induced me to throw them into that story which is introduced in the commencement of the first volume: since which, idleness and illness prevented their being finished till very lately; when, perhaps, I was less capable than ever of rendering them worthy the perusal of my readers. My motive for publishing them *now* will be easily known to my friends, and, I hope, not be deemed an improper or an illaudable one by them. To the world in general I will only add, that, although the avidity with which our sex frequent Circulating Libraries, and the pernicious novels every day published, are evils much

P R E F A C E. v

to be lamented; yet, while the one part are excited by curiosity and novelty to read, and others by interest or vanity to write, they cannot wholly be avoided. It is humbly hoped, therefore, that this attempt to put into their hands a trifle, which boasts no other merit than that the moral which it conveys, the language in which it is written, has no tendency to corrupt or pervert the heart or head, will be forgiven.

E D E N

H. R. A. C. E.

to be lamented: yet, while the one
part are excited by curiosity, and not
easily to read, and others by interest
in variety, to the latter, I must
admitly be avoided. It is, however,
to be put into their hands with a view
to make no other merit than that the
moral, which is conveyed, and the
style in which it is written, has no
incongruity to contend or prevent the
part or reader will be forgiven.

E. D. B. M.

EDEN VALE,

&c.

Miss LOUISA DENBIGH to Mrs. DENBIGH.

St. James's Place.

I SEIZE the earliest opportunity I can steal from the polite attentions of Mrs. Grandison, to pay my duty to my dearest mother, to thank her for her kind condescension to my unreasonable request to see this vast metropolis, and to quiet her tender apprehensions for my safety.

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B

I con-

I confess, I felt not a little awkward when I considered with what amazing rapidity I was flying from you, my dear Madam, and from my Emma. The degree of self-importance with which my little heart had exulted at becoming, as it were, my own mistress, insensibly wore off, and was succeeded by a reflection on my ingratitude at wishing to escape a moment from that maternal care, that uncommon indulgence, which has hitherto prevented my every wish. I endeavoured, however, to silence every disagreeable idea, and, as soon as the approaching day-light would suffer me, began to examine
the

the countenance of my fellow-traveller, whose appearance struck us so much whilst we were waiting in the parlour of the inn for the setting out of the diligence. Her melancholy air, her frequent sighs, and the respectful timidity of her behaviour, increased my favourable impressions, and I endeavoured, by every little assiduity in my power, to bespeak her attention. Our happily being the only passengers, gave me the opportunity I wished to converse with her with greater freedom; and before we arrived at the end of our journey, I assumed courage enough to assure her, that a solicitude to al-

alleviate her apparent grief, rather than
 an impertinent curiosity, induced
 me to wish to become acquainted
 with the cause of it. I offered her
 my service in the most friendly
 manner--“Suffer me, at least,” said
 I, “to partake of, to share your sor-
 “rows--there is something I
 “cannot describe which attaches me
 “to you--I have never yet sought to
 “check the impulses of my heart,
 “and I have not yet been conversant
 “enough in the world to have suf-
 “fered the inconveniences which,
 “I am told, must arise from giving
 “way to them--If I can alleviate
 “your distresses, you may command
 “me:

“ me : if my importunity is displeas-
 “ ing to you, a word from you shall
 “ silence me.”

“ You are too good, Madam,” she
 replied, her eyes glistening with a
 tear of grateful sensibility : “ I can-
 “ not express how thankful I am to
 “ you for interesting yourself for me;
 “ and I am sure it will give pain to
 “ your sympathising heart, when I
 “ tell you that my miseries are be-
 “ yond the reach of human assist-
 “ ance---they come immediately
 “ from the hand of Heaven, and my
 “ every comfort, my fond and only
 “ hope, lies buried in the grave!”

—She then gave me a brief narrative of herself, and I was so affected with the uncommon distress this young creature has suffered, that I entreated her to give me her little story in writing, that I might transmit it to you. She has taken my direction, and as soon as she is settled will let me hear from her.—Enough of this melancholy theme for the present; I am not in a disposition for such a tale.

You are well acquainted, dear Madam, with the natural giddiness of my disposition, and will not wonder that your Louisa's brain is almost
turned

turned with the variety of objects that surround her. Suffer me, however, to assure you, that your excellent precepts, your kind admonitions, are deeply imprinted in my memory. Taught by your uncommon tenderness to regard you as the best and dearest friend, as well as in the character of a revered parent, I have ever held your judgment as my invariable rule of action---the heart which you so early instructed to reverence truth and virtue, would blush to harbour a sentiment which you would disapprove: nor can I claim the smallest degree of merit from my obedience---you have so

kindly united pleasure with *duty*, that we have experienced from our infancy, to follow your advice implicitly, was to be happy.

May indulgent Heaven spare the best of mothers to the prayers of her children!—Mr. and Mrs. Grandison received me with the greatest joy and affection. I will not attempt to tell you half the flattering things they say of your goodness in sparing me to them. They unite in every kind wish to you and to my Emma, to whom I will write next post.

Adieu! Dearest Madam, pray for your grateful and happy

LOUISA DENBIGH.

Miss LOUISA DENBIGH to Miss DENBIGH.

St. James's Place.

WELL, my dear Emma, at length my ardent wishes are accomplished, and I am writing to you from this enchanting London; a spot my busy imagination has visited so often in idea; which has so long been the subject of my dreams, my waking thoughts. And now, if I were not afraid my dear sentimental girl would laugh at me, I would confess a simple truth, and what, I believe, every one but yourself knew long enough ago; only that you are infinitely wiser than your Louisa. You have
repeatedly,

repeatedly, you know, told me, when I was planning schemes to prevail on my mother to permit me to make this excursion, that I should soon be weary of London; that the regularity and composure in which we have always lived, had given us both such a relish for rural amusements, as would not be easily conquered even by my superior levity, and that I should sigh after Eden Vale before I expected it. Would you believe it, Emma?—your prophecy is already verified—I no longer feel that restless love of variety which I thought would increase with the very air of London. Like a true woman, I am

no

no sooner in possession of my long-expected and ardently-wished-for gratification, than I hold the bauble in contempt. Emma, I will positively never marry---tell Westbury not to think of me---I am immutable in this; for I should repent before we left the church——And yet I can never bear the horrid appellation of Mrs. Louisa, spinster; to poke my sharp face into every society, disliking and disliked by all; to live upon mangling the reputation of my neighbours, and scolding at the card-table—worse and worse—I must consider this important point before I resolve.—But, to be serious,

I have

I have not yet said one syllable of the thousand things I have to tell you, nor do I know where to begin---oh, with the kind reception I met with from this family of harmony---You cannot guess how attentive they are to make me happy---and indeed it is almost impossible to be otherwise with Mr. and Mrs. Grandison. You have not seen enough of this amiable couple to judge how very different their constant behaviour is from that of the generality of the fashionable married people we meet with in this polite æra. Mr. and Mrs. Grandison seem literally to have but one soul; they live, they breathe but for each other;

other; and, although this tenderness is so visible in every action, yet it never leads them into fulsome fondness, or inattention to their friends. The cheerfulness which they are so remarkable for, seems increased by each other's presence, and you see an involuntary joy light up their countenances when they meet, even after the shortest absence. I could not help remarking the other day to Mrs. Grandison, that it was extraordinary to me, a man so infinitely agreeable as a companion, so much the admiration of the women, and the favourite of his male acquaintance, as Mr. Grandison.

son, could possibly have escaped falling into that cast of amusements, those nocturnal meetings, which are so generally the taste amongst men of fashion at present. "Why, my dear Louisa," said she, "I will explain this to you. You well know ours was a marriage of love: my feelings for Mr. Grandison were so ardent, so extremely tender, that I should have been the most miserable of women, had he become, after our marriage, what is esteemed a fashionable husband. I considered," continued this amiable creature, "that I was by no means possessed of those striking beauties

“ beauties of person which would
 “ attach him to me merely on that
 “ score; it behoved me therefore to
 “ study, with the strictest attention,
 “ every minutia in his disposition,
 “ and to keep his mind so diverted,
 “ so perpetually amused in that sort of
 “ society of which I could partake,
 “ that he should not feel a want of any
 “ other, a desire to wander in search
 “ of foreign pleasures. To effect this,
 “ I endeavoured to select such of his
 “ acquaintance whose manners and
 “ conversation were most agreeable
 “ to his taste; with these I formed
 “ continual parties, and yet varied
 “ the style of our amusements, with-
 “ out

“ out seeming to be the projector of
 “ these entertainments, but rather
 “ suffering the proposal to come
 “ from him.—I never admitted a
 “ cloud of melancholy to overcast
 “ my own temper, but suppressed a
 “ thousand pains, a thousand anxie-
 “ ties, which my own ill health and
 “ that of my child might cause
 “ me, lest I should weary him with
 “ my complaints. If he is gay, I
 “ trifle instantly ; and when business,
 “ or the petty vexations from which
 “ no situation can be exempt, for a
 “ moment intercept that vivacity
 “ which is so natural to him, I never
 “ attempt to enquire why he is se-
 “ rious,

" rious, but watch for the return of
 " his good-humour, and prepare
 " some little scheme, which he is
 " fond of, to prevent his falling into
 " thoughtfulness again. I once or
 " twice persuaded him to enter into
 " a meeting, which was proposed
 " when he was in company, by a
 " set of men whose lively turn of
 " conversation pleased him, though
 " I well knew he detested their
 " principles. I will honestly con-
 " fess to you, my dear, I had my
 " own reasons for this; I was very
 " clear he would be tired of them
 " before they would separate. If I
 " had endeavoured to have dissuaded
 Vol. I. C " him

“ him from the party, it is more
 “ than probable he would have gra-
 “ tified me; but then he would not
 “ have been convinced that their
 “ society would prove unpleasant to
 “ him, and which only passing a
 “ day with them could convince
 “ him of. The event proved I was
 “ not mistaken in my opinion; he
 “ returned to me before the usual
 “ hour of their separating. I seemed
 “ surprized, and affected even to
 “ chide him for having left his com-
 “ pany. “ Indeed, my dear Emily,”
 “ said he, “ I could not support it
 “ any longer: gaming, you know,
 “ I never enter into, and I was tired
 “ of

“ of attending to the table before
 “ supper. The conversation became
 “ after it, among some of them, so
 “ noisy and prophane, and, among
 “ others, so trifling and absurd, that
 “ I was disgusted. I hate drinking,
 “ and shall have the head-ach to-
 “ morrow for my complaisance.
 “ These meetings may be well
 “ enough for men whose connec-
 “ tions and situations in life cannot
 “ introduce them every idle evening
 “ into a rational and mixed society
 “ of both sexes; but for married
 “ men, who can enjoy such a fire-
 “ side as mine, who can pass the
 “ hours of convivial pleasure in
 C 2 “ mirth

“ mirth and good-humour, un-
 “ clogged with intemperance, it is
 “ absolutely wasting both health and
 “ felicity.’——I concealed the plea-
 “ sure I felt at this declaration, and
 “ seemed rather to encourage him
 “ to try once more the festive board.
 “ I am not under the least appre-
 “ hension of these kind of societies
 “ perverting his affection; a virtuous
 “ mind, at his age, takes some time
 “ in weaning from home-felt enjoy-
 “ ments: it is artful vice, concealed
 “ under the specious appearance of
 “ virtue, that I have found most
 “ pernicious: to men of sense, the
 “ unblushing temerity of indecency
 “ and

“ and irreligion is ever disgusting in
 “ the highest degree.—Thus, my
 “ dear Louisa, have I unfolded to
 “ you my little plan of action; but
 “ I must acknowledge, I am more
 “ indebted to the goodness, the rec-
 “ titude of Mr. Grandison’s heart,
 “ and to his uncommon tenderness
 “ for me, than to my own sagacity.
 “ Nor can I claim any merit from
 “ this behaviour; he is the lord of
 “ my willing affections; my love
 “ for him increases every day, for I
 “ have every day fresh instances of
 “ his unexampled goodness—But I
 “ hear him at the door; believe me,
 “ my heart beats this moment at his

“ approach with the same delight
 “ that it experienced when he first
 “ assured me of his love.”

Not marry! why, my dear Emma, we will both be wives immediately; I long to become a Mrs. Grandison—it is fortunate for Westbury that he is not here this moment. But don't imagine, my dear Emma, this desire to please is all on her side; in Mr. Grandison you see the ardent lover, softened into the tender husband, the attentive friend: he flies to prevent her every wish; he never suffers that *ennui*, that offensive languor, which we have so often remarked

marked in the husband, to oppress him; he is fond without being fulsome, he is polite without being troublesome—in short, as neither Westbury or I are blessed with the accomplishments of this charming couple, we had e'en better continue as we are—*A propos*, I forgot to tell you I am just engaged in a flirtation with a divine captain in the guards, who dresses in the most elegant style imaginable: he is at present the delight of the *ton*, and you have only to obtain his notice, to become the object of universal admiration—But how I ramble! I absolutely intended to have given

you a description of a thousand fine things that I have seen, and I have now written till dinner is near ready, and the important business of hair-dressing unfinished!—Adieu! My sister, are you careful of your health? That reflection in one moment makes me serious: for our mother's sake, for the happiness of your Louisa, be well.—Make my tender, my dutiful regards to our dear parent, and believe me

Your ever faithful

LOUISA DENBIGH.

Mrs.

Mrs. DENBIGH to Miss LOUISA.

YOUR letter, my dearest child, relieved me from a thousand anxieties, of which you can form no idea, and which I smothered at our parting, lest any appearance of concern in me should damp that pleasure which I saw sparkle in your eye at the prospect of your journey. I am too well experienced in the vicissitudes of life not to be sensible that care and uneasiness will intrude unsought for into every heart; it has been, therefore, my first principle (since the death of my dear Mr. Denbigh, which

which left me no tie, no business on earth, but the tender solicitude I feel for you and my dear Emma) to keep every causeless vexation from your gentle bosoms ; and I am amply repaid for this careful attention, by your chearful obedience to my wishes, and by the reflection that you both regard me rather as an affectionate friend than as a severe parent. You well know, that the slender jointure I was left in possession of, and the trifling fortunes your poor father could bequeath you, rendered it utterly impossible for me to give my children an education which would fit them for the society

society of the great world; and it has been with infinite concern that I have seen the sparks of vanity and ambition in your little heart inclining you to sigh after the pleasures of London, even in the retirement of Eden Vale. I endeavoured to suppress these feelings as well as I was able; your natural good sense assisted me, and I flatter myself that it will inspire you with a proper contempt for those fashionable follies you are now a partaker of, and give you back to your affectionate mother and sister, with such feelings, such propensities, as will make your future life happy: and I hope and trust,

trust, you will reflect, that the airs and manners of a Lady Betty, or a Lady Charlotte, if not reprehensible in those children of levity and dissipation, would very ill become the daughter of a plain country gentlewoman, whose utmost expectation is three thousand pounds, and whose highest ambition should be to make some worthy man a prudent wife. I did not mean, however, to moralise so much to you, my sweet girl; an affectionate concern for your happiness has drawn the subject from me. I shall turn over Emma to you as a correspondent, and shall not often desire more than
to

to hear part of your letters to her :
you know I always held your correspondence with each other as sacred, and therefore you will write to her quite unrestrained. I am extremely miserable about this dear girl's health ; I think I see it hourly declining : there is a languor in her eye which brightens up at my approach, as if she feared that I should observe it : if she does not mend, I shall be obliged to call you home, my love, before I would wish it ; but I know you would not leave your Emma, where your tender care is necessary to her. God bless you, my child ! My affectionate compliments

(30)

pliments to Mr. and Mrs. Grandi-
fon, whose kind notice of you does
me honour.

I am,

Your ever affectionate mother,

D. DENBIGH.

Miss

Miss DENBIGH to Miss LOUISA DENBIGH.

NO, indeed, my Louisa, I feel no inclination to laugh at your disappointment; I am rather concerned to find your enjoyment less lively than you expected. I had flattered myself that the ideas I had formed of the gay world were the effect of a pensive and gloomy imagination, and that you would find your every wish fully gratified in that round of delight, of which you so ardently desired to partake. But pray, my dear, may not this vacuum, of which you already complain, proceed rather from

from your own too busy spirit, which, I well know, is ever searching for some new object, than from the inability of the gay world to give you pleasure. You were ever inclined to paint the felicity you had in idea in colours so very warm and animated, that the possession of your long-desired happiness seldom answered to you :—whilst I, who am of a less sanguine turn, and who neither hope or wish for any event with such ardency, am generally paid when it arrives, at least to the height of my humble expectations.

It has often surprized me, my dear Louisa, that, with dispositions so very unlike, our sisterly affection should have been heightened by the tenderest friendship, the most perfect unanimity. When we were children, you know, we were ever engaged in different pursuits: I was continually poring over my book, or learning some melancholy song, whilst you were ever busied in some lively play, or seeing which flower or ornament would become you best; but even at that early period *your* persuasion could always draw me from my graver employment, or *my*

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D

request

request induce my Louisa to listen to an interesting fable, or a doleful ditty. I have often heard it observed, that different tempers associate best together ; and our example seems to prove the assertion : but I cannot think it holds good as to closer ties ; that I could be happy with a man of a very gay and dissipated turn, or that my Louisa could sit down contented with a philosopher. I often wonder that Westbury never made more impression on your heart, from the liveliness of his manner : for my part, you know I always thought him a perfect rattle. Your absence, indeed,

indeed, has wrought some change in him: I met him yesterday with Hammond's Elegies in his hand; and this morning he was playing, "When forc'd from dear Hebe to go," on my harpsichord—I believe he will become a companion for me at last—But don't fear the loss of your captive; he still tells me that I am wonderfully insipid.

Your account of Mr. and Mrs. Grandison charms me: the little time I passed with them, when they paid you a visit at Eden Vale last spring, left a very favourable impression of them upon my memory,

which your letter has infinitely increased. If I can raise my idea to any *human* felicity, it must be in such an union, where the strong tide of youthful passion is softened by mutual esteem, by tender friendship: every day must be a fresh source of delight, and “the moments but vary
 “to smile on their loves.”—Yet, with these high ideas of matrimonial happiness, I am of opinion, I shall never change my state: my heart, which is so tremblingly alive to friendship, would be in perpetual alarm at giving way to a softer emotion; a look of indifference, a capricious word, nay, an hour’s absence from the object
 of

of my affection, would be productive to me of an age of misery. I must pray then, with the sensible Mrs. Greville, for indifference—indeed, the scarcity of our men does not make my danger very terrifying—however, we have got an acquisition in a young clergyman, that is just come to reside at Mr. Lawson's house, who is gone to the south of France for his health: Westbury has seen him, and brings him here to tea this evening. Now, if my Louisa were here, how would she waver between the pink and the lilac, to adorn her for conquest on this important event? for Westbury

says he is young, extremely handsome, and very agreeable. I tell him, he has escaped a fit of jealousy, and a certain quarrel, by your absence on this occasion---he sighs, and wishes you were here.

Our dear mother has written to you this post: she fancies I am not well; her tender affection for me, as well as yours, create you needless fears. I am not ill. Indeed, I never could boast rude health. I am very pale, and the same languor possesses me that I have experienced these three years; but I do not feel any other alarming symptoms.—Be hap-

py then, my dearest sister ; but do not drink too deeply of the Circean cup. Acquaint me of every thing that passes in your heart---there is not a sentiment in it but is infinitely dear to your

EMMA DENBIGH.

Miss LOUISA to Miss DENBIGH.

YOU say very true, Emma: to be in love is a most delightful sensation; the pleasures and the pains charmingly distressing. My heart is become a perfect pincushion, and is unfortunately so extremely susceptible, that I am, on a moderate computation, in love six times a day. At one moment, I am captivated by the divinest equipage, a papier-maché vis-à-vis, and the most enchanting long-tail'd horses; at another, I am under the dominion of a pair of point ruffles; and last night I was overpowered at once with a suit of celestial

celestial blue velvet, lined with squirrel-skin---There was no standing this you will allow---To be sure, the *man* was fallow, aukward, and emaciated; but the coat was irresistible. I looked down on the forlorn captain with ineffable disdain, and I have not bestowed a glance on him since till this morning, when he appeared adorned with a bouquet as large as himself, (such moss-roses!---think, dear Emma, of moss-roses in January! disposed with infinite taste,) and, bowing gracefully, laid it at my imperial feet with so insinuating an air, that at this moment the suit of velvet and the bouquet

quet are in the scale; which will preponderate, Cupid only knows.

Your letter, my love, and that of my dear mother, which I received this moment, have put me in such spirits, I shall rattle the whole day. There is no saying what delight a letter gives me from my friends. Mrs. Brooke, that inimitable woman, says something delightful on this subject, at the departure of the last ship from Quebec, and the arrival of the first in the season, in the river St. Laurence—I hate quotations—but you know what I mean; every line of her charming letters is well known to you.

You give too just a description of my volatile heart; I must examine into this propensity to variety, and endeavour to check it. 'At present, indeed, I have no time. In one instance, however, it is possible, I hope, for my most sanguine wishes to be gratified. I have raised my expectations very high too. You, who know my taste for the stage, will suppose I mean in going to a London theatre—I am on the wing this moment, dressed for conquest, they tell me; but, in my own opinion, this little simple person is half lost in the profusion of feathers and ornaments with which my hair-dresser

has

has pleased to distinguish me.--
 Adieu, my dear, till my return !

--Upon the whole, Emma, I
 have been delighted beyond my most
 flattering ideas--I have seen Mrs.
 Abington in the character of a fine
 lady. You know, the fame of this
 incomparable actress has reached
 even our village ; her dress, her ele-
 gance, her comic excellence, have
 been the theme of every London ac-
 quaintance who has visited our cot-
 tage. But all you can form an idea
 of comes far short indeed of Mrs.
 Abington's Lady Betty Modish ;
 every thing she does, her slightest
 movement,

movement is grace itself: in short, you could not suppose she was acting a part on a theatrical stage, but giving a perfect picture in real life of what the manners of a finished lady should be. There is a certain significance about her that engages your attention to her minutest action: she enters into the spirit of her part without ever being *outrée*: if her author has wit, she lends force to its poignance by her admirable expression; and if he is wanting in that particular, as is, alas! too often the case with our artificers of modern comedy (must I not put Mr. Sheridan here in a parenthesis), her admirable

mirable action atones for his deficiency, and you forget for a moment the insipidity of the poet, whilst you are applauding Mrs. Abington. Her dress is always the topic of conversation and emulation; 'tis impossible to describe it, but it is the criterion of taste. 'Twas said of Mrs. Oldfield, that, on the strictest scrutiny, no one could ever have wished to have added to her ornaments; yet her dress was so happily contrived, that the eye could not have spared the most trifling of them---this observation is equally applicable to Mrs. Abington.---She is no less respectable in her private character than

than in her theatrical one, and is visited by many families of the first distinction and worth. She wants no foil, otherwise, I think, she had many this night---I did not see, according to my idea, a fine gentleman on the stage—so stiff their manner—dress does not sit easy on them. 'Tis more my fort to give the tribute of praise than censure. Would I had come to town before Garrick was no more! how much have I lost! Certainly, Emma, it is more difficult to play genteel comedy well, than to be very passable in tragedy: in the former, it is necessary to have a perfect knowledge of genteel life,

added

added to a certain degree of natural ease and elegance, without which the eye is perpetually disgusted : on the contrary, in tragedy, a good sonorous voice, a tolerable person, and a certain quantity of starts, flares, and pauses, and now and then a well-judged fall, often make amends for very considerable deficiencies. Indeed, this is very apparent from observation ; for the hero or heroine, who makes a very respectable figure in the buskin one night, shall offend you extremely the next, in attempting a *Gentleman* or *Lady* in common life. — Am not I amazingly clever, Emma? I am astonished

nished at my prodigious learning—
 but I may as well make a merit of
 what, I doubt not, you already guess,
 I do but retail the remarks of others.
 Theatrical matters take a large share
 of the conversation in town.—What
 an immense letter have I written!
 How in the world do I find time!
 Read to my dear mother whatever I
 say that may entertain her ; more she
 never exacts of our letters ; and when I
 am too giddy, spare me, dear Emma!
 Tell me continually of your health :
 one line shall call me to you in an
 instant ; nor would I ever forgive
 you, if you suffered me to be away,
 when my care, my presence, was

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E

needful

needful or desirable to you.—I inclose the melancholy tale of poor Mrs. Conway---I need not bid you shed a tear for her distress---the gentle heart of my dear girl sympathizes with every unhappy being.—May that soft tribute of humanity prove the only sorrow she may experience, prays her

LOUISA DENBIGH.

Mrs.

Mrs. CONWAY to Miss DENBIGH.

YOUR commands, Madam, have influenced me to undertake a painful task, that of recollecting my melancholy history---Recollecting, did I say? Is it possible that my afflictions can ever be forgotten by me for a moment?---Bereft of even hope, the wretch's last resource, there is nothing left for me here but unavailing tears, and silent anguish—Yet let me acknowledge, dearest Madam, that your kind attention, your friendly solicitude, in some measure, alleviated my grief---my heart glows

with gratitude for your benevolent compassion, and the widow's and the orphan's benediction shall still await you.

I had the misfortune to lose my mother before I could be sensible of her tenderness. My father, who was a clergyman in the west of England, educated me and an only son in the tenderest affection for each other; but dying when I was about the age of nineteen, and my brother one year older, he recommended us strongly to the care of a sister of his, who resided in North-Wales, and who had also one son about the age of
of

of my brother. At the death of my mother, this affectionate aunt had left her family to pass some years with my father, to console his grief, and to share in the task of instructing our infant minds, on which her maternal care had left the tenderest sensations of gratitude. As soon as my brother could settle his affairs, and call together the whole of our little fortune, which he divided equally with me, he purchased a commission in a regiment of foot; and, leaving me in London, to proceed on my journey into Carnarvonshire, repaired to join his company, which was then in Ireland.—I met

the most affectionate reception from my aunt; and the pleasure of her society was much heightened by that of her son, who then resided with her. Why should I add to the measure of my affliction, by attempting to describe to you the amiable person, or the endearing manners, of this graceful youth? Conceive to yourself, dearest Madam, all that Nature could bestow, and you will not do him more than justice. It is needless to take up your attention with our growing affection; suffice it to say, that my aunt saw and approved our connection, and a time was fixed to unite us for ever.—It

is

is necessary to acquaint you, Madam, that my aunt had a brother, who early in life went over to America ; had gained a considerable property there in trade ; and that at this period we received news of his death, and his having bequeathed his fortune to my Edward, whose presence was necessary there to secure his effects. This account brought with it pleasure and pain : the prospect of an affluent fortune would scarce make amends to us for the separation it would require. Could we have been permitted to follow the impulses of our own hearts, we would have continued in the peaceful retirement we

then enjoyed: but this would have been to listen wholly to the warmth of youthful passion, and prudence dictated other measures.

Edward prepared for his voyage. His affectionate mother exulted in the good fortune of her-darling son: I too endeavoured to share in her delight-- But when I reflected I was to lose his dear society for many tedious months---when the danger-of the sea presented itself to my imagination---every prospect of advantage was lost in terror and regret.—Fatal prognostics!—Why was I not suffered to accompany him!---My
persuasions

persuasions might have had weight--- my arms should have detained him from the bloody field---or, at least, I might have died with my Edward. But our tender parent refused my entreaties; she desired, nay, she commanded me to stay with her: she would not part with both her children; the shock would be too great for her failing years to sustain. She wept, and I yielded to her request. — My dear Edward earnestly desired that we might be married before he set out on his voyage; and, as he seemed to think it would render his exile less irksome to him, I was easily prevailed on to comply.

A week

A week before the ship sailed, we were united. The hours flew with uncommon rapidity; and before we had recollected that the sad moment was at hand which was to separate us, he was called from my arms. The tears that he shed at our parting fall at this moment like bearded arrows on my heart---yet that dreadful moment was bliss to what I have since experienced.—When he left me, my fond imagination dwelt on his return—Hope sweetened my heavy affliction, and taught me to look forward to ages of future felicity. How different now are my reflections! Time cannot

not bring about an event that will relieve my sufferings, and every prospect is an universal blank. — I should have told you before, Madam, that we were extremely uneasy at not hearing from my brother ; that we had made frequent enquiries after him, and all we could learn was, that he made an exchange from the regiment in which he was first stationed, and that he was gone somewhere abroad.

The first letters we received from my Edward brought us the pleasing account that his uncle's affairs were almost settled ; that his effects
amounted

amounted to more than our most sanguine wishes could have imagined ; and that he would return in a few months. He touched slightly on the commotions in that part of the world, and seemed extremely zealous in the interest of the Bostonians. Totally ignorant of the world or its pursuits, we should never have concerned ourselves in ministerial affairs, had not our Edward's situation rendered every thing that passed in America of the greatest consequence to us. I examined the news-papers with careful anxiety : the accounts from that part of the world filled me with the most alarming

ing

ing apprehensions. I wrote to beseech him to return home; I entreated him to pay no regard to his property, but to set out instantly; I painted my fears to him in the most lively colours, and my mother added her persuasions to mine. What could steel his heart against our ardent entreaties! How could he destroy in one fatal moment the fond hopes of years of increasing happiness; and, regardless of the endearing ties which bound him to us, abandon us for the false calls of an imaginary phantom! What reward can glory, can honour bestow, to dry the tear from the furrowed
cheek

cheek of an aged mother, or to comfort the widow's unutterable woe!

The remaining part of my sad tale a few words will explain to you. Some time after, a mutual friend of my mother's and our Edward's visited us at our cottage. A fixed melancholy on his countenance prefigured to us some dreadful tidings---he burst into tears when he entered the room, and seemed big with some direful calamity, which his humanity forbade him to utter---he prepared us by gentle degrees for our misfortune; and it was some
time

time before we were capable of
reading the following letter :

“ WHEN this dreadful recital
“ of your uncommon misfortunes
“ reaches you, your hearts will be
“ softened for the wretched author
“ of them, by the reflection that he
“ has expiated an involuntary crime
“ with a life which became odious,
“ embittered as it was with the con-
“ tinual recollections that he had
“ involved his wretched family in
“ irretrievable misery.

“ My heart rejoiced at the letter
“ I received from you just before I
“ left

“ left Ireland, acquainting me of
 “ your intended marriage with Con-
 “ way. I was astonished that you
 “ had not received those I had writ-
 “ ten to you, informing you of my
 “ having suddenly exchanged with
 “ an officer who was going to Ame-
 “ rica, and very advantageously ; and
 “ that I was ordered instantly to em-
 “ bark with the regiment for that
 “ country, where I arrived full of
 “ ungovernable transports against
 “ the rebels, and prepared with the
 “ utmost alacrity for an expedition.
 “ ———I had been engaged in several
 “ skirmishes, in which I had been
 “ successful, and had gained confi-
 “ derable

"derable favour with my command-
 "ing officer.—I solicited him on
 "the fatal morning which has struck
 "daggers to your heart, to give me
 "the command of a small body of
 "men who were preparing to attack
 "a post of the enemy. We were
 "met in our way by an equal num-
 "ber of their troops, and instantly
 "closed in with great fury on both
 "sides: many lives were lost, and
 "the action continued with asto-
 "nishing perseverance; till at length,
 "having wounded the officer who
 "headed this courageous troop, he
 "fell at my feet. The men, intimi-
 "dated with the death, as they sup-
 "posed,

“ posed, of their commander, im-
 “ mediately surrendered, and I pre-
 “ pared to give the gallant youth all
 “ the assistance in my power. I
 “ raised him hastily from the ground.
 “ The resemblance of his counte-
 “ nance to a face with which I was
 “ well acquainted struck me, and
 “ an uncommon and involuntary
 “ horror seized me---I tore open his
 “ bosom to search for his wounds,
 “ and the picture of my sister flashed
 “ conviction in my eye, and instantly
 “ acquainted me with the mis-
 “ chief my hand had committed---I
 “ pressed him almost lifeless to my
 “ bosom---I uttered your name in
 “ an

“ an agony of grief---The well-
 “ known sound called his fleeting
 “ soul from the mansions of bliss to
 “ which it was hastening---he
 “ turned his dying eyes on me, and
 “ faltering asked, if I was not
 “ Melville? ‘ I am,’ cried I, with
 “ phrenzy, ‘ I am that detested
 “ wretch---the unhappy brother of
 “ your Dorothea!’—The pangs of
 “ death shook his feeble frame—he
 “ grasped my hand, and, calling on
 “ your name, expired in my arms.

“ Gracious Heaven! why didst
 “ thou not, in thy justice, at that in-
 “ stant annihilate this fell murderer

“ of domestic peace---this wretched
 “ fratricide!—But I was doomed to
 “ survive, to bear about this load of
 “ misery---to follow this beloved
 “ brother to his grave, and pay the
 “ last sad duty to his dear remains—
 “ and now I have done with life.

“ Pardon me, my sister!--and thou,
 “ revered parent of the most affec-
 “ tionate son! if thou canst with-
 “ out horror reflect on the miserable
 “ being who has sent thee childless
 “ to the grave, pray to that Power
 “ who only can comfort thy afflic-
 “ tion, that the blood of thy son
 “ may not be registered against me
 “ ---but

“ —but that in the grave my crime
“ may be forgotten.

“ MELVILLE.”

Mr. W—— (the friend I mentioned to you, Madam) acquainted us, that this hapless brother, the day after he had written the foregoing letter, (which he ordered should be forwarded to him if he fell,) met the death which he unceasingly provoked, in the first onset.

This complicated misery for a while overwhelmed me, and it pleased Heaven for some time to deprive me of a sense of my calamity. I passed

many weeks in a state of distraction, and, when I recovered my reason, had the additional distress to see my only parent and friend emaciated with grief, and sinking, with the fatigue she had undergone in attending me, with hasty steps to the grave. I endeavoured to calm my own agonizing sorrow, in pity to her declining state.

Oh, Madam, could you have beheld this worthy woman gazing on me with silent anguish -- the unbidden tear streaming from her eye -- the smothered sigh bursting from her bosom, whilst she earnestly conjured

jured me to bear with pious resignation the stroke which her failing age could not sustain, your tender compassion would indeed have been excited!—A few weeks put an end to her sorrow and her life, and I was left at the sad liberty to weep alone.

Would to Heaven that the real authors of this scene of woe (whoever they are) could behold my sufferings!--that the sad story of my woes could soften their obdurate hearts, and lead them to sheath the sword they draw against their fellow-subjects!--How many hearts are

with me this moment weeping tears of blood!---How many widows, mothers, and orphans, are now deploring their irretrievable losses!—Can *they* look up to that throne for mercy, from which all power is delegated, whilst hapless wretches are every day slaughtered by the obstinate and cruel perseverance of bloody-minded men? And can they expect protection and safety at his hands, who delights in peace and good-will towards men?

Surely our gracious Monarch is kept in ignorance of this scene of desolation and distress, or, attentive
as

as he is to the religious and moral duties of life, he would not be unmindful of his subjects, who have an equal claim to his love, if melting beyond the torrid zone, or freezing amidst Canadian snows.—Perhaps I rave, and speak too irreverently of those who, we are told, “can do no wrong;” but it is the sad privilege of misery to complain.

When you met me, Madam, and with such humanity interested yourself in my story, I was going to London to settle some affairs which required my presence. They are now completed, and I am returning to
my

my solitude to wait for that awful
moment which shall unite me to my
husband for ever.

DOROTHEA CONWAY.

Miss

Miss DENBIGH to Miss LOUISA.

WELL, my Louisa, I know you are impatient for an account of our new-acquired beau; but I am not equal to the task; your sweetly descriptive pen would do him better justice. I never saw a man, of whom I had been told so much, appear to so great an advantage. His person is elegant, but manly; his air peculiarly graceful; his voice is absolutely melodious—I know you would say he is too handsome; for you always declared you could not bear a handsome man—His understanding,
if

if one may judge by what passed during his visit, must be good; improved by reading, and a knowledge of the world which is uncommon in a youth of his age and situation. He did not appear to have that assuming levity so disgusting in the generality of young men, but attended to my mother with the most respectful diffidence, and to me with the most attentive politeness.—I am sure, my dear Louisa, you would admire him. How happy we should be in such a brother!—My dear mother, who is, you know, very civil to all strangers, and particularly so to men of his profession, pressed him
to

to stay supper, which he declined ; but Westbury interfered and kept him ; and our parent gave him a general invitation to Eden Vale, with a warmth which convinced me how much she was pleased with him. He politely replied, that he should avail himself of her civility with infinite pleasure ; and that he was sure the notice of our family would prove his greatest recommendation to the village.

What an affecting tale of Mrs. Conway's ! Alas, what a fate has she experienced !---We have wept almost continually since we read it.--

I was

I was extremely entertained with your remarks, as well as pleasing account of your London amusements. As to the first, I protest you are become a perfect theatrical critic; and I doubt not they are very judicious; you always had a taste that way. Pray go on with your ladyship's criticisms, they amuse me mightily.---I laugh'd much at your sprightly description of your heart, and its inamorato; but this little history of sorrow has left such an impression on my mind, that I cannot answer the gayer part of your letter.---I am sure Mr. Wynne would be extremely affected with the mournful tale; he seems to have

have a very compassionate heart ; he sighed often, and, I thought, seemed to look very melancholy at times-- I wonder whether he is in love-- most probably he is--I have been told the Welsh ladies are very handsome and agreeable. When we are become more intimate, we shall hear something of his history, perhaps. You know I am very romantic, and always suppose that there is some remarkable occurrence in the life of every one--I hope, however, this young man is not unhappy : I am sure any woman, who could render him so must have a hard heart indeed—

I must

I must break off hastily—Westbury engaged Miss Conyers and your Emma to walk with him and Mr. Wynne to St. Anne's Ruin this morning. They dine with us afterwards, so that I shall not have time to write more to-day; I will therefore seal and send this to the post.—My mother is charmingly; I am uncommonly well, and ever yours,

EMMA DENBIGH.

The

*The Reverend Mr. WYNNE to HENRY
MORELAND, Esq.*

YOU have often requested me, my dear Harry, to give you some account of myself since I left Italy: now that I am more composed, and my mind has a little recovered the shock it had received, I will endeavour to give you this satisfaction, although the performance of my promise will bring to my recollection some scene which it will be painful for me to relate.

The sudden death of the late Lord Melvyn, whose partiality for me in-

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duced

duced him not to think my youth an objection to accompany his son abroad, rather as his friend than governor, hastened us to England before the present Lord had half completed his tour.—The real concern this young man expressed for the death of his good father, seemed to hang heavy on his mind, and increased my regard and friendship for him. I endeavoured to divert his melancholy, by every little attention in my power; but he was resolute in refusing to see any company for some time.—Melvyn-Court is, you know, but a few miles from the cottage where my mother has settled—

tled---In my frequent excursion to pay my duty to her and my sister, Melvyn would continually accompany me---The peaceful retirement of the place, he said, suited the disposition of his mind; and he preferred the homely welcome and plain fare which my mother gave him, to the splendour or studied gratification of luxury.

Nancy, my sister, was by this time grown up into a fine blooming country girl, but totally void of those graces likely to captivate a man so much attached to high life as Lord Melvyn: I had not, therefore, the

smallest suspicion that he could think of her in any other light than that of a rustic girl, to whom his friendship for her brother induced him to behave civil.

The little assistance I could give my mother, in her daily attendance on her farm, engrossed much of my attention.—Incapable of the remotest idea that the man I loved could harbour a thought of injuring that friendship I would have died to maintain, it never struck me, that, whenever I was so employed, Nancy was perpetually with him ; that she
took

took unusual pains to ornament herself; and that she studiously avoided my looks and conversation.

Things went on for some months in this state. It is needless for me to tell you how many frivolous excuses he made to wander towards our farm, or how stupid I was in not perceiving his intentions---till chance one day led me towards a little harbour where this unhappy girl and Lord Melvyn were seated. The words, "love and everlasting fidelity," uttered by him in the tenderest accents, struck my ear. Surprise rooted me to the spot on which

I stood, and I heard him entreating this poor girl to leave her mother, and accompany him abroad: he soothed her objections to this act of disobedience, with the pernicious assurance of marrying at some distant period, and of the pleasure her family must feel at her good fortune. —To give you an idea of the different sensations which racked my mind at this discovery, is impossible. I hastily left the place where I had received so fatal a blow to my peace, and retired to my room to consider on some step to frustrate the designs of this insinuating villain. To have the honour of my family, the ruin
of

of my sister thus basely attempted, by the man on earth whom I most loved, gave my heart the bitterest anguish. I was conscious that I could not meet him with calmness; and I wished to spare my mother, and the poor infatuated girl, the distress my reproaches would bring on them: I therefore sent a servant to acquaint him that some business demanded my instant attendance, and that I should meet him at Melvyn Court the next morning.—The very intimate footing on which we lived rendered this message not extraordinary to him: he left our cottage soon after; and I dispatched a ser-

vant immediately with the following letter :—

“ To Lord MELVYN.

“ My Lord,

*“ IF the reflections of your own
“ heart cannot touch you with re-
“ morse for the base and unmanly
“ part you have acted, in endea-
“ vouring to dishonour the sister of
“ a man whom you called your
“ friend, I hope this letter will
“ awaken them.—From an open
“ assassin I could have forgiven an
“ attempt like this---but the man
“ who assumes the sacred title of
“ friend to cover the blackest de-
“ sign,*

“ sign, and strikes a dagger through
 “ the peace of that heart, where he
 “ was harboured with the tenderest
 “ affection, forfeits every pretension
 “ to honour or esteem---This action
 “ cancels every obligation between us.

“ I inclose you the gift which
 “ your noble father thought proper
 “ to honour me with, as a reward
 “ for my endeavours to point out to
 “ his son that path of rectitude and
 “ integrity from which *he* never de-
 “ viated. As I have the misfortune
 “ to be indeed convinced these en-
 “ deavours have proved ineffectual, I
 “ cannot think I have the smallest
 “ right to his bounty.

" I must further acquaint you,
 " Sir, that, although my sentiments
 " and profession alike deter me from
 " seeking to take away the life of
 " any one wantonly, yet I have both
 " a hand and heart ready to defend
 " the honour of my sister, and the
 " peace of my mother, against the
 " greatest peer, or the bravest man,
 " who dares to attack them.

" I am, my Lord, yours,

" EDMUND WYNNE."

This letter struck him with either
 remorse or shame, and he set out
 immediately for Italy.—What an
 abaser of the mind, my dear Harry,
 is

is guilt ! This proud Lord did not dare to face the man he had injured.

—But what amends, alas ! can he ever make for the stab he has given to our domestic happiness ?—My poor Nancy ! the chearful innocence that bloomed on her cheek, that sparkled in her eye, is now no more ; her heart is perpetually fighting after the false splendour, the imaginary grandeur, with which he dazzled her weak mind ; or, what is still worse, perhaps she loves this vile betrayer. The delight with which she used to assist her mother in her household cares, is now succeeded by discontent : her brother she looks at
with

with suspicious and averted eye, and supposes me, doubtless, an enemy to her happiness. I would have talked with her on the subject, but she carefully avoided it. When I told her, as gently as I could, how I had acted, she burst into tears, and left me.—Surely the villain cannot have dared—By Heaven the very thought fires my brain!—If it were possible that he could have gained the vile advantage he was preparing to take over this inexperienced, unhappy girl, I would hunt him to the utmost verge of the earth—and do—what?—plunge him, with all his crimes on his wretched head, into eternity—

eternity—(Would that be a grateful return for all the tenderness his noble father lavished on me?)—or, by provoking my own death, leave this unhappy creature exposed to the unpitying world, and my helpless mother without a protector——

Wretched alternative! Could the man of the world be prevailed on to contemplate coolly on the complicated misery he brings down on that family, the peace of which he sacrifices to the momentary gratification of a passion which debases the human mind, and degrades it to the level of a brute-- surely he would start with horror from the sad victim

of

of his pursuit, whose eternal peace is the price of one guilty hour.

The annuity of 300l. a year, which I returned the deed of to this base friend, I had appropriated to comfort my mother's declining years, and what she could spare, for a provision for my sister. My father's heart was too benevolent, and his spirit too large, for him to prevail on himself to secure them one during his life, although his income from the living which the late Lord Melvyn procured for him was large. This worthy benefactor intended providing for me in the church at
our

our return from abroad ; but, sensible of his approaching end, and my dependent state, he generously left me this annuity, with a strong recommendation to this young man to fulfil his intention. The matter was near concluded—but may I perish when I accept the wages of my sister's infamy ! It is on my mother's account only that I regret this total deprivation of our prospects---I prefer independent poverty to any situation which is to be procured by servility, or administering to the vice I abhor.—I confess, I could not patiently dangle at a great man's levee, or teach my face a pliant

pliant smile, at the principle my heart disavowed, or the sentiment which my judgment disapproved. There are few necessary comforts of life but what are to be acquired within a very moderate income : for the want of its superfluities, the approbation of our own minds will make ample amends.

I have at present settled myself in a very pretty village in Derbyshire, from whence this letter is dated, and have a very eligible situation, as to house, &c. &c. at a Mr. Lawson's, the rector of the parish, who is gone abroad for his health, and of whose church I have the care.

Thus I have endeavoured to throw together a disagreeable narrative of my late very uncomfortable life---it will not be uninteresting to you, if your friendship for me has stood those strong tests of time and absence.

I am interrupted by an old college acquaintance: I met him unexpectedly yesterday, and he calls on me to-day to introduce me to the principal family in this village.

Adieu, dear Harry!

Yours,

EDMUND WYNNE.

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H

Miss

Miss LOUISA DENBIGH to Miss DENBIGH.

“HOW happy should we be in such a brother!”---I might, perhaps, have no objection to such a connection in the family; but, if I can guess right, my dear Emma would much rather not stand in that degree of consanguinity to this sweet swain. Why, my dear, you are absolutely a lost creature---Jealous too of the Welsh ladies---Oh charming! ---See the difference, child, between you grave sentimental misses, and us of a more giddy nature: we hover gently round the flame---now and
 then,

then, perhaps, butterfly like, fling a wing and away; but you rush at once into the danger, and are consumed in a moment.—Seriously though, I am dying to see him. What a picture have you drawn! Why the Apollo of Belvidere had not half so many graces.—Now would I bet any wager, that Westbury's eyes and teeth are quite as handsome; and if you could but have one peep at my divine captain, you would allow that Mr. Wynne's grey coat and unpowdered hair could never be put in competition with embroidered velvets, frosted toupees, point ruffles, &c. &c.—I long for

H 2

your

your next letter.--That walk to St. Anne's---it is a most inspiring place---the winding stream that murmurs through that charming vale, the rich hanging wood, the magnificent ruin, round which the ivy creeps in mournful silence; and that moss-grown seat where you and I have so often sat, and, contemplating the beauties round us, listened to the notes of that sweet wood-lark which has so often charmed us with his warbling!--If he has half the taste you give him, he must be delighted with my Emma, and I shall be snatched from this dear London to attend your *happy day*---That is the phrase;

phrase; is it not?—though, alas! many poor souls find to their cost it proves a woeful day.—But pray, my dear, how stands this hero of your tale indebted to Madam Fortune? Not much in her favour, I warrant: that capricious lady has an uncommon aversion to your people of taste and sensibility. But this is of little consequence; nothing so enchanting as living in a cottage upon love---the superfluities of life, or what *I* might, perhaps, be extravagant enough to call the comforts of it, are mighty insignificant considerations to your true inamorato's---but, as I fear I shall never feel the inspirations of

this powerful deity so entirely as my Emma, I confess I am at liberty to attend to some other trifling requi-
sites, which go a great way to render *life* desirable, even with those we love; and, as I am nearly interested in your happiness, so, dear girl, descend a little, and tell us something of the *temporal affairs* of your Leander.

I find something new to admire every day in this charming residence of the pleasures and the graces---the more I see of London, the better I like it---the theatre still holds the first place in my inclinations---

But

But I am sure you have no leisure
now to attend to my descriptions, so
adieu !---I write to my mother with
this,

Your

LOUISA DENBIGH.

H 4

Mr.

Mr. WYNNE to HENRY MORELAND, Esq.

YOUR affectionate answer to my last, my dear Harry, calls for my immediate thanks. My spirits were so thoroughly wounded by the shock Lord Melvyn's baseness gave me, that I began to despair of the existence of friendship in this degenerate age. We were, you know, the very Pylades and Orestes of our school and at college. My mind was preparing to take a very misanthropical turn, and inclining to view mankind with a suspicious and malignant eye; a disposition which, of all others,

others, I should be sorry to imbibe, as, I believe, it gives birth to morose and ill-natured habits, and thwarts the amiable impulses of the heart, which naturally lead us to social intercourse and tender connections. Your letter has awakened in me anew those gentler sensations--yet be not offended, Harry, if I totally reject your well-meant and so delicately-concerted plan, and do not impute it wholly to that pride which you say I carry to an unpardonable extreme. At present I will only assure you, that my heart acknowledges your disinterested friendship, and holds it very dear: but my
situation

situation is extremely eligible, and that of my mother comfortable even to affluence---it is there alone that ill fortune can reach me. Should any new and unexpected stroke visit us, depend on it that you will be the only man to whom I will make it known.

I met with an old poetical reflection this morning which struck me much. I am absolutely of the author's opinion, though I am equally convinced, that the man who is so happy as to call you friend, will never be reduced to the necessity he dreads. I give you a few of the lines:

“ Amid

- “ Amid this threat’ning deluge, far outspread,
“ Where shall the faithful *dove* of Friendship
 rest?
“ Return, sweet bird! to thy domestic shed;
“ The poets age, and miracles, are ceas’d—
“ Ah, yet return not; spread thy pinions wide,
“ No labour spare, encompass land and sea,
“ Let nought the inestimable jewel hide,
“ Find me a friend, if any friend there be:
“ Nay, better shouldst thou suffer dark deceit,
“ Than *solitary* to my breast return.
“ Who dreams of pleasure is not so complete
“ A wretch as he who only wakes to mourn.”

My resentment against this Mel-
vyn is considerably abated; I feel a
mixture of contempt and pity for
him. What ample powers had he
to experience and indulge the ten-
derest of all passions in its most re-
fined

fined and delicious state!--A fine
 person, advantages of education,
 rank, and a large estate, clear and
 unincumbered, without being re-
 duced to the necessity of uniting
 himself to age or ugliness to support
 his title, as many of our modern men
 of quality have been---He might
 have enjoyed the enviable felicity of
 making happy the object of his love,
 a blessing those whose fortunes are
 unhappily contracted can never hope
 to possess.—In my situation, I
 have only to endeavour to defy the
 influence of the deity. My soul
 would shrink, even were it in my
 power, at the bare idea of forming a
 connection

connection of marriage from interested views—love, love alone, should cement the gentle bondage. The golden fetters with which Avarice binds his prostituted votaries, are turned by almighty Love (who will not see his altars profaned) into galling chains of iron.

Harry, my heart is unusually softened---I have seen a woman---such a woman! —Thrown, as I have been, by my early introduction into Lord Melvyn's family, into that gay world, of which this bewitching sex form so interesting a part, never before did I behold one who could
awaken

awaken in my heart that spark of fire which animates and gives life to the whole frame. Such unadorned simplicity!-----But you will think I rave----To be more explicit then: I went with Westbury last week to be introduced to the first family in this village, of whom he gave a most pleasing, and, as I have since found, just description; but supposing he had his partialities there, I accompanied him to Mrs. Denbigh's with the most perfect indifference.—The family consists of a mother and two daughters; the youngest is in London, to whom Westbury is soon to be united.—The old lady received

us with infinite politeness, accompanied with a certain ease which can only be acquired by having passed the early period of life, when the mind takes strong impressions, in the great world. The remains of beauty are still visible in her venerable countenance; age has not stamped its usual moroseness on her features, though it has added strength and experience to her mind to bear an extreme reverse of fortune with the most chearful resignation. Her manner to her daughter is uncommonly pleasing; the tender solicitude of the parent seems blended with the affection of a friend — But you will
suppose

suppose I am smitten with the mother instead of the daughter—Ah! is she not the mother of Emma Denbigh?

How shall I attempt to give you any idea of this interesting girl! She is not what a painter would call a regular beauty: her form does not command admiration, but it engages love. Symmetry could not compose any thing more elegant than her whole person—her complexion is delicately fair, her hair very light, and her eyes of the darkest blue;—but such softness, such melting expression, never surely beamed but from

from the eyes of Venus herself----

I cannot finish my picture---Her mouth!---you must have seen, have felt the irresistible influence of the smiles that play there, before you can form the smallest idea of their uncommon sweetness.—There is a delicate languor in her air that almost amounts to melancholy, which seems to have been the remains, if not the present effect, of ill health.—By the way, there cannot be any thing more absurd than the propensity every lover has to give the portrait of his mistress: the same things have been said a thousand times by every puppy of his Dulcinea.—I will not throw

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I

together

together any more rhapsody on this beauteous casket; but of the gem within allow me to speak, not with the hyperbole of a lover, but in the language of cool, dispassionate observation. Her heart seems the residence of every mild and gentle virtue. When she speaks, tenderness and benevolence flow in honied accents from her lovely lips. Her manner, politely attentive to every one, yet flows not with that unmeaning, undistinguishing civility, which can never flatter, because you see it as universally lavished on the acquaintance of an hour, as the approved friend of many years. She
has

has a difference of behaviour, without which, to me, all attentions are disgusting. To her mother she pays the most implicit respect, while her lovely eyes shine with the softest expressions of gratitude and love---the sound of her voice calls Emma in a moment from whatever employment she is engaged in; she flies to execute her commands; and this obedience seems not the effect of duty, or of constraint, but of choice.—

Amongst her young acquaintance, she is free and lively, without being girlish. To Westbury she pays a particular regard, as the approved admirer of her beloved sister. To

me---ah, Moreland! why should I wish her to distinguish me?--And yet I have been mad enough to encourage such a hope---but I will be more guarded, I will watch over this too susceptible heart. To be permitted to pay her the respectful attentions, the watchful solicitude of a brother or a tender friend, is the highest degree of felicity to which I must ever pretend---yet who can restrain the soft emotions of the heart, or say to the affections, Thus far shalt thou go, and no further?--or is it indeed beyond the frigid rule of Prudence to wish that *Fortune* had been less niggardly in its gifts?---that

I had

I had been enabled to place the woman I love in a situation equal to her birth and education; and to offer, with a heart the most tender and faithful, those additional comforts of life, without which it is madness to think of happiness and Miss Denbigh!

Conscious of my weakness, yet unable to shun the pleasing ruin, I am now hastening to this bewitching woman. Her fascinating voice still vibrates on my ear.—Pity thy lost

EDMUND WYNNE.

Miss DENBIGH to Miss LOUISA.

AND if I were really so far gone in this dangerous, this formidable passion, as you suppose, my sister, is it with such levity you would sport with your Emma's error?—Would it not be more sisterly in you to assist me in guarding my heart against the soft delusion, and recal the wanderer back with your friendly admonitions?—I admire your vivacity, Louisa; but surely you sometimes give the reins to your too lively imagination, and suffer it to hurry you away with ideas of its own creation. This is certainly

certainly the case as to the present instance. You cannot surely think me so devoid of prudence, as to give way to this sudden unbounded prepossession in favour of a man, to whose real character, situation, disposition, or connections, I am an utter stranger—so ungrateful and insensible to our tender mother, as to dispose so entirely of my heart, perhaps absolutely contrary to her wish; a heart which it has been her unceasing task for eighteen weary years to impress with far different sentiments.—Be more just, my sister, to your Emma, or she will fear to communicate to you her every thought

with her wonted freedom, lest you dress them thus in some light fantastic colour of your own, and they become more the sentiments of the gay Louisa than those of your less flighty sister.

I fear I grow peevish ; this last line or two appears so. Forgive me, my dear, I meant it not—but indeed I was piqued at your rally, and still more out of humour with myself ; for my expressions must have been unguarded when I spoke of Mr. Wynne, or you never could have taken up such an idea of my partiality for him. Let this plead my
excuse

excuse with you.—Continue to indulge your playfulness, my dear Louisa; I will suffer you to do so whilst this *tendresse* of mine is only the chimera of your own prolific brain: but if in reality your Emma should ever become the victim of an unhappy inclination (for an unworthy she hopes she cannot, but) for an improper object, then, my sister, my friend, exert your utmost influence; watch over me with a vigilant eye; teach me to combat with the destructive intruder; soothe me with your tender compassion, and still remember,

“Curst be that wit, how well so e’er it flow”—

Forgive

Forgive me, if I spoil the measure,
and add---that tends to create a
blush on the cheek of silent distress,
or glance another arrow at the al-
ready stricken deer.

The formidable walk to St. Anne's
produced none of those consequences
which you supposed; and yet, I as-
sure you, Nature had lent her aid to
render it beyond description pleasing:
she wore an unusual mildness for the
time of the year, and the company
seemed inspired by the benignity of
her aspect. A thousand little agree-
able circumstances happened, and
things were said that rendered the
walk

walk enchanting, which related would appear as mere nothings—I need not tell you, that you were talked of, and wished for. Westbury looked, as he always does in your absence, in perpetual search after something he had lost—(his heart, I suppose)—his eyes wandered, and straying involuntarily to the seat you had once occupied, to the tree whose friendly shade was once the shelter of his dear Louisa, amused himself with twining your favourite woodbine around it, which, mourning your absence, seemed to forsake its support. He alone of the little party seemed dissatisfied, but not enough.

enough so to render him inattentive or ill-humoured. We returned early, and ended the day at our house; our cheerfulness heightened, our conversation improved, as it ever is, by that of our dearest mother, who may be truly said to "have joy in our joy."—Thus ended this awful day without any of your notable prognostics—and yet I will acknowledge (for why should I fear to do so?) that every interview increases my favourable opinion of Mr. Wynne. —Suspend your judgment till you come home, and when you see him, you will not think me so very partial. —

Heavens,

Heavens, Louisa ! if it was not for our mother's uncommon goodness, into what a dilemma would your giddy answer to my last have thrown me ! She came into my room as I was writing at this very moment, your letter lying open on my desk : " Writing, my love," said she, " and " to your sister ? " I blush'd---I believe the first time her presence ever made me do so :---she saw, and at once understood my unusual confusion, yet kindly avoided to remark it, but, with a look that penetrated my heart, said, " You are busy, my Emma, I will not interrupt you," and left me.

Gracious

Gracious Heaven, if she had suspected!—I mean, if she had inadvertently attempted to read your strange rhapsody about this man, what would she have thought? Perhaps she would have credited your hasty conjecture, and have been offended with the innocent object of your rallery; Mr. Wynne might have suffered in her opinion from your imprudent levity.—Dear Louisa, be more guarded for the future.

Your

EMMA DENBIGH.

Miss

Miss LOUISA DENBIGH to EDWARD
WESTBURY, *Esq.*

AT length, Sir, you receive this so long requested letter, to which, if it be a favour, I will confess your patient acquiescence with the request I made not to follow me to town entitled you.—Yet be not the least arrogant on this amazing condescension; For, I must tell you, it is in some degree to gratify a whim of my own.—Curiosity, that propensity so natural to my sex, in some measure influences me to write; but of that by and by—I will first answer some part of your last remonstrance,

strance, unfashionable as answers to such matters are at this polite end of the town.

How often must I repeat, what I have already told you in the plainest terms, that it was by this excursion to London only that I could ever have formed any judgment of my unsettled heart, have given the bent of my inclinations a fair trial, and been enabled to decide whether I am calculated by nature for a discreet matron, to creep gently down the vale of life in the respectable character of an unfashionable wife—or fated still to turn round in this wheel of Folly, till,

till, grown grey in the service of the capricious deity, I fly to cards, cats, and scandal, and finish my useless existence among these natural resources of an ancient fine lady of the modern *ton*.

Under the eye, and happy in the society, of my revered, my beloved mother, and my Emma, my natural disposition, though not restrained, was yet guided and led by their example to the course of life which they pursued from choice. — The fidgeting Westbury (excuse me, Sir, I am defending myself, without respect of persons) gave me no opportunity

tunity of consulting my taste, by being perpetually at my elbow, which effectually prevented any other swain from speaking to me—And now, sagacious Sir, what would you have said to me, if, yielding to your continual and urgent sollicitations, and to the silent approbation of these dear relations, I had given you my hand, accompanied with a volatile and unsteady heart, violently attached to the unknown, untasted, yet enchanting pleasures of London, to which you would have carried me in all the splendour of bridal finery? There, admired, because a novelty, and admiring, because even its follies

lies would have been to me a novelty, I should have plunged deep into every fashionable error; by some of them led, perhaps, to injure that fortune your fondness would lavishly have bestowed on me. Opposition would too probably have added strength to my foibles—your representation of them might have begun, and, at length, rooted indifference in me (dreadful idea!) to my husband, and we might have sat down for life, if no worse, at least a wretchedly fashionable couple!

Mark the difference of pursuing my plan—I now unrestrained par-

take of all those various pleasures of which I have heard so much; and, as it is no one's interest here to direct or confine my taste, I am at liberty to judge for myself. If I am so giddy as to prefer running round this scene of dissipation, with an empty figure, ornamented externally with a fine coat and a feather, to the more rational delights which surround us in the peaceful society at Eden Vale, you ought to bless your kind stars, which directed your course from so light and fantastic a woman, and thank me for saving you from me—If the contrary! ---but I will suppose no more, and
leave

leave you to guess the conclusion—only thus much let me say to you, to account for what you particularly complain of—I forbade, absolutely, and on pain of my eternal displeasure, forbade your coming to town this winter, for many prudent reasons. You ask me to give you them explicitly: some of them I will; and they are obvious indeed, from what I have before hinted at, of your persevering attention to me in the country. I have now leisure to distinguish between the manners of a polite and reasonable man, and a beau of the present age---perhaps you may not lose by the comparison.

—The reputation of receiving the visits of a lover, known to be so by every one, subjects one to a thousand inconveniences, would have involved us in perpetual quarrels, and we should have lived, as dog and cat, a life, as if we had engaged in the matrimonial one which I have described

—And now not a syllable more on this subject—I will positively let you no further into my sentiments, likes or dislikes, as you wisely entreat---Patience is your only remedy.

—I have often told you, had you pretended merely to the character of my friend, I should have trifled with you—But Love is a tyrant;
endure

endure his chains then without a murmur ; or, if they become harsh, e'en be a rebel, and bravely break them at once.——What an infinity of time have I already wasted on you, which ought to have been employed in a thousand more important avocations ! You can have no idea---but I forgot, you are generally in London in the winter, and therefore must know how little time we can possibly have to bestow on our friends, husbands, children, minds, or any such trifling, old-fashioned considerations, when every moment of it is absolutely necessary to dress our hair, attend to our millener,

mantua-maker, &c. &c.—*A propos*, I had forgot the purpose for which I write---let me know, and that instantly, who and what this Mr. Wynne is, who is become the Adonis of Eden Vale---pardon me, your sweet self excepted. Do you know him? What are his connections, his character? Is he rich?—What a question, and the man a curate in the country!

Thus I have given you a subject---be joyful, for the old one is worn thread-bare.—Adieu!

LOUISA DENBIGH.

Miss

Miss LOUISA DENBIGH to Miss DENBIGH.

YOU become serious, my dear, and that is enough to close my mouth for ever from jesting, at least on the subject of Mr. Wynne. At present, I believe, you are unacquainted with the state of your own heart; when it has discovered itself, I doubt not but you will impart the feelings you find there to your sister.--I will acknowledge that I looked grave at perusing some passages in your last; but, as I never can suppose *you* would be unjust, I imagine *I might* be flippant.

Westbury,

Westbury, who is a perfect dun in the letter way to me, tells me that you are to have a masqued ball at Evelyn-Hall——Prodigious!—A masquerade at Eden Vale! The idea is truly laughable—Heaven knows, many of the dear rustic masters and misses would have been sufficiently in disguise with the aukward finery with which they would have thought fit to deck themselves on this great occasion, without the addition of a masque. I don't think the idea bad though, if the place was more adjacent to London, as it will take off from the ceremony attending such meetings—But I die to know how it will

will be contrived, and all about it.
 —Pray be very particular ; and tell
 me likewise if the Baronet is as much
 your slave as ever.

I have been at the play and opera
 several times since I wrote last : I
 have seen Mrs. Yates, the expression
 of whose countenance we have often
 admired in your print of her, in the
 character of Medea ; but the anima-
 tion she throws at times into her
 features is beyond your imagination
 to suppose. She must, when young,
 have been amazingly handsome ; she
 is still an incomparable actress. Mr.
 Grandison tells me, if I could have
 seen

seen her in Medea, I should have been *astonished*; if in many other tragic characters, *delighted*.—I have seen Henderson's Hamlet (my favourite play); he is a very just actor: but I found in myself no disposition to weep, when Ophelia said, "I would have given you some violets, but they all wither'd when my poor father died." You know, we have been told Mrs. Cibber's speaking that sentence always drew tears from the audience.—By the way, Emma, you know acting is now the rage; even Welch belles and beaux now wear the sock and buskin, and, I am told, make capital heroines and heros

heros, at Sir Watkin Williams's theatre in Denbighshire.—We will positively get up Hamlet when I return; you are the very thing for an Ophelia. Tell Westbury I expect by that time he will have pined himself to a perfect Ghost, and be quite ready for the character. Mr. Wynne shall be Hamlet---let me know if you think he will do. As for myself, I'll play Ostrick; and, when I have borrowed my little captain's hat and feather, his red-heel'd shoes, and practised his elegant method of making a bow, you will say I shall at least make a very passable country beau.—I am serious;

we

we shall easily get it up, and I desire you will set about it.

I have enjoyed a pleasure this evening, my sister, far beyond any that the amusements of London have yet afforded me. Mr. Grandison took a box at the oratorio opposite the King and Queen. The splendour and magnificence of their appearance at first naturally engaged the attention of your girlish Louisa. The exalted harmony of the music, the grandeur of the chorusses, affected my mind, by a quick transition, almost beyond myself. But at length, when I grew more composed,
my

my eyes were involuntarily directed to an object which seemed to engage the attention and applause of the whole house ; nor can I describe to you the emotions I felt at contemplating the gracious affability, the benign goodness that animates the countenance of our *Queen*. The repeated testimonies of their loyalty that welcomed her approach seemed not the vociferous acclamations of an undistinguishing populace, easily captivated by titles, and dazzled by exterior pomp, but the honest tribute of the *heart*, which can be exacted only by virtue, by goodness, such as hers. After she had taken
her

her leave with the most gracious condescension, some little delay kept her a moment or two in her box—fresh affectionate bursts of applause sounded from every part of the house—the Queen came again forward, and with the most tender affability smiled her thanks, her countenance animated with a lustre more engaging than the most perfect beauty could ever bestow.—I felt myself *proud* at that instant in being her subject, and regarded her with a reverence and affection little less than we do our revered parent. How sincerely did I wish the thorns too often planted in the circle that

wreathes

wreathes the brow of royalty, may to her be smoothed by every domestic comfort; and that the Almighty may here, *in some measure*, reward this *most* perfect pattern and example of goodness he has thought fit to place in so exalted a station.

Is it not amazing, Emma, that, busy as the many-tongued voice of party, of public censure *is*, no cabal, no mouth, however invenomed, has ever dared to mention our amiable Queen but with reverence and applause? Great indeed must have been her merit, most wise and prudent her conduct, since we are not

to learn from daily experience, that the higher the rank, the more conspicuous the situation, the more it is open to the eye of malevolence, the breath of slander. 'Tis no less astonishing to me, that, when *such* a pattern is afforded to the ladies of the great world of domestic virtues, *such* wives and mothers as we see among them do not shrink from *her* view appalled, who has not suffered the most exalted height of human grandeur to interrupt her attention to every private duty.

You will be angry with me that I am not giving you an account of the
fingers

fingers,—raving of the composition of your adored Handel—I wonder I thought of any thing but beaux, jewels, and all the elegances of dress.

---The truth is, I went home, and dwelt on the subject I have been writing on: I followed the amiable pair I had seen to their private apartments, in idea, and saw them enjoying, in the midst of their lovely children, that unutterable felicity which neither crowns or pomp can bestow.

The opera exceeds all my little powers of description--such a lovely assemblage of charming women, so

L 2

elegantly,

elegantly, so highly dressed!---The music itself is more in your style, who are so exquisite a judge in these matters--But the coffee-room is divine; such a delightful *mélange* of princes, ministers, ambassadors, senators, beauties, coquets, withered dowagers, and ancient would-be blooming spinsters!---But how simply am I throwing these descriptions away upon you, who are now encompassed with, and sitting in judgment upon, gauze ribbons, and all the frippery appendages of Arcadian nymphs and rural shepherds!---Not a word more will I spare for such a fate.

LOUISA DENBIGH.

EDWARD WESTBURY, *Esq. to Miss* LOUISA
DENBIGH.

THOU dear capricious deity, sole arbitress of my fate, I reverence even thy frowns ; and, far from wishing to break thy chains, reason, reflection, and every sensation of my heart, rivets them still faster—my bondage is the effect of choice, confirmed by every succeeding moment.

But, oh Louisa ! if, in the hour of gaiety, of giddy delight, when tired, perhaps, of the daily homage paid to thy charms, of the fluttering scene around thee, where nothing half so

L 3

fair,

fair, so lovely, so all-perfect as thy-
 self, can ever meet thy eye, some
 kind gentle sylph, a friend to love,
 should steal you a moment from the
 gayer throng to the calmer pleasures
 of Eden Vale, then bestow one soft
 sigh on thy Westbury, and he will
 own his sufferings over-paid—And
 yet they are severe!—Three long
 months absence from all my soul
 holds dear, whose presence gives
 perpetual sunshine, who can bid all
 my days at once be good and joy-
 ful, is almost more than I can, with
 that patience you exact, sustain!—I
 would willingly, nay with rapture,
 have met every danger your ima-
 gination

gination has painted in such lively colours, to have possessed that felicity for which I have so ardently sued ---It is utterly impossible that Miss Denbigh could ever have become ungrateful or unjust---The goodness of your understanding would secure you from the slightest temptation from those superficial pleasures you ludicrously describe; and the greatness of your soul would shrink indignantly from any gratification which would endanger his peace, on whom you had bestowed a gift so inestimable as yourself.

In answer to your queries relative to Wynne, I was intimately ac-

L. 4

quainted

acquainted with him at the university,
 where he was exceedingly esteemed
 by every rank. His extraction is
 Welch: his father was a man of
 dignity in the church, but more
 eminent for his goodness and uni-
 versal benevolence, than even for
 the honour he did to his profession:
 he died suddenly, and without
 making that provision for his wi-
 dow, Edmund, and one daughter,
 which could have been wished. The
 late Lord Melvyn was the friend and
 patron of the father, and continued
 to be so to him. He went abroad
 with the present Lord, who, it is
 supposed, will provide for him at
 his

his return from Italy, where he now is, and to which place the ill health of Mr. Wynne's mother prevented his accompanying his Lordship; for this young man adds to his other amiable qualities the most uncommon filial attachment—indeed, I don't know one whose character stands higher in every relation and duty of life than this happy object of your enquiry.—As to the beauty of our sex, I cannot pretend to be a judge; but I assure you he is the prevailing taste of the ladies of all ranks, and his person and manners are very elegant.

Thus,

Thus, Madam, I have faithfully fulfilled your injunctions, without daring to hint even a wish with respect to the *why* they were so minutely, so earnestly made. Have you already marked him out for a fresh victim to adorn your triumph? But that I hold it impracticable to *see* you and be safe, I should imagine that here *your* power would find resistance; for I am mistaken if he is not already far gone in the soft bondage. — But what of Wynne, or of the humble swains of Eden Vale! — they must all fade away and shrink to nothing at the appearance of the prince of beaux, the
finished

finished Sir James Evelyn, imported this week, amidst a thousand elegances, from Paris. Miss Evelyn and he are arrived at the Hall; and next week, the grand ball, given on his coming of age, is to be, I hear, in *masquerade*. Will not this novelty bring you from town?---But I detain you from those important avocations you justly allow of such consequence.

Consider my patient acquiescence with your cruel prohibition—shorten my penance, dearest Louisa, if you have the smallest compassion for me! ---How many soft and tender sensations am I obliged to suppress, with
which

which my heart ever overflows, when
I take up my pen to you !--- But your
will is ever a law to your own

WESTBURY.

Miss

Miss DENBIGH to Miss LOUISA DENBIGH.

YOU are, I am sure, my dear, infinitely better calculated to adorn and to enjoy a masquerade than I am; so your pen would be much happier at giving a description of the scene. Indeed, the task that you have enjoined me is more than I can fulfil: it is impossible to represent truly what is unpleasing to us: our language naturally takes the colour of our thoughts, and a gloomy mind will cast a shade of its melancholy over the most spirited amusements. I must, however, acknowledge, that
the

the appearance was more splendid, and the whole better conducted, than I could have imagined—numberless genteel families from great distances, habited with real elegance—the masters and misses of our acquaintance, of course, you may imagine, were in the rural style.—You have a talent to be amused with the ridiculous, and you would have been not a little diverted with shepherdesses as fat as the landlady at the Angel; and Floras and *hay-makers*, many of whom could number more years than my mother.—My own dress was, as you will guess, very simple, white, and all
its

its ornaments beads and artificial flowers: my hair Westbury's man undertook, and dressed after the manner of your favourite picture by Sir Godfrey Kneller.—They talked of a character; but the very idea had like to have frightened me away from going at all.—Westbury was an excellent Mungo; and Mr. Wynne with him, in the character of Leander, sung us some of the songs in the Padlock.—Sir James and his sister, magnificently habited as a sultan and sultana.—My mother, who was obliged to go in decorum, and many other ladies, claimed the privilege of age to be unmasked.

I was

I was not a little confused and displeased at the particular attention with which Sir James thought proper to notice me; and more so after we had unmasked—he had an interlude introduced, in which a Cupid paid me a very undeserved, and, I think, unmeaning compliment.—I foresee infinite uneasiness to myself from this man's return: if he supposes his gallantry flatters my vanity, he is much deceived; and if he has any serious thoughts (as you have imagined), his title and superior fortune will not weigh the least grain in his favour with me: I cannot barter *happiness* for exterior advantages;

vantages; and to me *happiness* and Sir James Evelyn are incompatible. —I cannot account for it, but his singling me out for the perpetual object of his attention, at this time, distresses me exceedingly.

I am not singular, I assure you, in my favourable sentiments of Mr. Wynne: the all-accomplished, the fashionable Miss Evelyn, distinguished him with uncommon partiality; she changed her magnificent habit, which was too heavy, for a lighter one, and personated his Leonora. She has a fine fortune, and independent too, but she is very un-

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steady.---I should fancy Mr. Wynne would not be pleased to dance attendance on a capricious fine lady. Money does not appear to be his idol, but perhaps he may be charmed with her; she is very handsome, but not so handsome as she was, Louisa. She dances well; but I thought she seemed too evidently impatient to shew her gracefulness in that accomplishment, as well as her refined Italian taste in singing.

I cannot remember a syllable of the fine things Cupid said to me; I thought, however, if I had in reality possessed the absolute direction of his quiver,

quiver, as he described to me poetically, I should have pointed his arrows differently to the turn they seemed then to take.

Thus much for our masquerade, which has made me dull and languid: perhaps Westbury will be better at describing it to you.

My dear Louisa, when do you think of returning home? Our mother is silent, because she wishes not to dictate to our inclinations; but should you therefore be put in mind that she is uncommonly indulgent?

Your affectionate sister,

EMMA DENBIGH.

M 2

Mr.

Mr. WYNNE to HENRY MORELAND, Esq.

YOUR letter came too late, Moreland; though, had it arrived sooner, I cannot believe that my heart would have listened, though my reason approved it.—That the indulgence of this attachment will add to my wretchedness, I am, alas! but too sensible; but I am also well convinced, that to lose her, whilst I am blest with her gentle smile of approbation, would be worse than annihilation. Her idea perpetually haunts me—I am insensibly forming some scheme to gain admittance to the house sooner than I think decorum

corum will admit of my repeating my visits. When I behold her, reflection vanishes, every thing wears a benign aspect---my love for her increases every soft and tender feeling of my soul, my benevolence is heightened, and my heart feels a general complacency that is undescribable.---Since I wrote to you, I have experienced the extremes of misery and bliss---but I must first relate to you the circumstances that gave rise to these contending passions.---

Sir James Evelyn, whom you remember at our university, is just ar-

M 3

rived

rived from Paris at his seat in our neighbourhood, and, in the whim of foreign folly, determined to give a masqued ball, a hundred miles from the capital. The company was numerous, some of them brilliant: among them the lovely Emma shone conspicuous for her unexampled beauty; she was unornamented, and "then most lovely." — I perceived, with infinite uneasiness, that Sir James singled her out instantly as the object of his admiration, and confirmed me in what I had before been told, that he is really her lover: a little interlude was performed, which likewise was intended as a compliment

compliment to her—How I could
rave to you of her irresistible manner,

“ Graceful as though in courts she’d always
been”—

But I will restrain these effusions.—
I could not help flattering myself
that she received the attentions of
Sir James with coldness; and I
thought I observed more of confusion
than of pleasure in the blush that
glowed on her lovely cheek during
this high-turned compliment: his
assiduities, however, gave me insup-
portable anguish—Mrs. Denbigh
doubtless approves his addresses, and
I am undone.—You may perhaps
think his title and great fortune ad-

M 4 vantages

vantages which would lead him to look higher for an alliance ; but their family is respectable, nobly allied indeed, and the father had high ministerial connections ; and, though his fortune principally fell with him, yet the daughters of Mrs. Denbigh are still sought for, exclusive of their exterior loveliness. But what being could have the audacity to think of Miss Denbigh with dishonour---to approach such infinite purity, such amiable modesty, with an impious eye?---Every man who sees her either becomes the captive of her charms, or feels for her the tender solicitude of a brother.

After

After passing hours of consummate misery, we at length set out for home. Miss Denbigh, a Miss Conyers, Westbury, and myself, filled a coach of Sir James's. Fatigue, and that ease which minds free from the inquietude which tortures your unhappy friend, soon lulled every one into peaceful slumbers. During that blessed interval, I enjoyed raptures that expression would wrong---the lovely girl, reclining her cheek on her hand, sunk insensibly on my supporting arm---I know how uninteresting such a scene must be to you, and I will desist---Bear with me, my friend.---I scarcely

scarcely dared to breathe, lest I should awake her, and she should deprive me of the innocent felicity of gazing on her.—I cursed the fellow for the haste he made, who soon arrived at Eden Vale, awoke the slumbering angel, and me from a dream of unutterable happiness.—Westbury and I retired to our apartments, it having been agreed that we should sleep there.—When I thought every one was still, I repaired to the dressing-room to execute a design I had long formed. There hangs in this little apartment an admirable portrait of the lovely Emma, drawn by an excellent master.

You

You are no stranger to my taste for painting in miniature: her implements are always kept in this room. I seized this happy opportunity of realizing to my eyes the object that is indelibly engraven on my heart; assisted by the portrait, I have caught a happy likeness---you can never conceive the exquisite pleasure I derive from this acquisition, for you are an infidel.

You will now be convinced that it is vain to argue with a passion which is become the business of my life---especially when I declare, that, utterly destitute as I am, of hope, I
am

am more blessed in being the friend
of Miss Denbigh, than the favoured
lover of any other woman.

Adieu!

EDMUND WYNNE.

Miss

Miss LOUISA DENBIGH to Miss DENBIGH.

THE conclusion of your last letter, my sister, has distressed me infinitely. Is it possible that my mother can think me so deficient in gratitude for her more than maternal indulgence, as to prefer, even for a moment, my own pleasure to her desire!—I would have flown to Eden Vale at the first receipt of your letter, but that my dear Mrs. Grandison is very ill; and it would be cruel in me to leave her.—However lightly that levity, which is so natural to me, may lead me to express

press

press myself, the least displeasure from her would destroy it for ever: a very few weeks, I hope, will bring me to her, and that she will receive me with her wonted goodness.

. And now, my Emma,—for I never will disguise a single thought from you, however you may be, for a moment, offended at my freedom,—are we not connected by ties which unite us yet more firmly than those of blood, the indissoluble bonds of mutual friendship?—Tell me then, my sister, my friend, if you are not yourself aware, that there is a certain
 peevishness

peevishness sometimes in your style, an expression of dissatisfaction, which betrays too plainly the state of your heart, even in your very endeavours to hide it.---Envy and ill-nature are passions which never could disgrace, never could find a harbour in your gentle bosom ; and my Emma would have been the last to remark on Miss Evelyn's conduct, had she singled out any other man than *him* she chose for the object of her attention.

There was a time when you would have signified my mother's desire that I would return home, or your own wishes, in terms less harsh than
the

the conclusion of your last.—In the letter where you answered my rallery on the description you gave of Mr. Wynne, you let fall an expression on our mother's entering the room whilst you were writing, which I would not at that time hint at, as your heart seemed too sore to bear reproof. Need I repeat it? "*What (say you) if she had suspected!*"---and again, "*Mr. Wynne might have suffered from your imprudence.*"—What should she suspect, my Emma, if the charge was groundless?---or could Mr. Wynne have suffered her displeasure, if my conjectures had been really erroneous?

neous?---Concealment, my dear, is the parent of anxiety and distrust, and the nurse of ill-fated love---extend your griefs to my faithful bosom, and do not suppose them wandered beyond your own. Hitherto our confidence has been reciprocal---should you be the first to fail in this great debt of friendship, and thus unkindly deny me a share in your sorrows? Must I deem myself as unworthy your affection, or suspect my sister of unkind, unfriendly reserve?---An indifferent eye, perhaps, in perusing your letters, would have passed over many trifling passages which have struck me; but where the heart is concerned,

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cerned, the eye examines more minutely. I have ever considered our correspondence as the tablature or book of our minds; which I read with accuracy, and study with attention. As I am most certain that your letters are now dictated by new sentiments, let me rather be indulged with your ample confession, than obliged to chance, or, rather, to my own observations, at my return, which must infallibly decide this matter. You cannot expect to find in me a rigid censor of your heart; although, I honestly confess to you, my warm interest in your happiness will lead me to discourage an hasty or imprudent attachment. You know, I ever had a thorough contempt for the idle play

play of masters and misses, which is falsely called love, and which either ends in disappointment, or in an unhappy or early-repented connection: neither can I approve of that romantic and ungovernable passion, which passes rapidly over the bounds of prudence, regardless of every consideration, and rushes at once into a state penury will ever render irksome; bringing beings into the world, who look up to reproach their miserable parents for their rashness—The unhappy pair no longer view the comforts of life with that indifference with which love blinded them—poverty encourages discontent, and mutual repinings succeed

to

to their short-lived felicity.—From the first of these errors, your superior understanding, your careful education, and, above all, the unremitted attention of the best of mothers, happily exempted you---from the latter, my dearest sister, may the interposition of Providence save you! —On your welfare depends mine, and, what ought to be dearer to you, that of our mother.—Write to me fully on this interesting subject.—Forgive my importunity, and remember it is the effect of that uncommon tenderness with which I am,

Your affectionate *friend* and sister,

LOUISA DENBIGH.

I have written to my mother *.

* This letter does not appear.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.